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An Early History of Gaffney and Cherokee County, South Carolina

Gaffney Chamber of Commerce

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AN EARLY HISTORY OF GAFFNEY AND CHEROKEE COUNTY

- SOUTH CAROLINA -

REC'D OCT 10 1968

President's Office

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A. B. Gaines
Gaffney Chamber of Commerce
Gaffney, South Carolina

CHEROKEE COUNTY

From the top of Tryon Mountain, in Polk County, N. C., descends a water-dividing ridge between Broad River and the Pacolet, which broadens and flattens into productive and well watered plains, of which Cowpens ridge constitutes the backbone. This series of undulating plains extend eastward between the above named streams to their junction, in Union County, South Carolina.

This section of Upper Carolina is well adapted to cotton growing and produces cereals and other farm crops with much success.

The streams have many and abundant water-powers for running machinery; hence, cotton mills and various other industries are increasing.

The people of the new county of Cherokee in upper South Carolina are rejoicing in their good fortune at having the last State Legislature grant a charter creating this new county. It is composed of sections of three old counties, Spartanburg, Union, and York, that lie along the waters of Broad river, an area containing fine rolling farm lands imbedding valuable iron and other minerals.

The fine location on which Gaffney City is building up, is naturally adapted for a large business centre for an inland town.

The Piedmont Air Line, as it was first called, began to run trains between Charlotte and Atlanta, in the fall of 1872. At Gaffney's crossroads, a station was established, and the place has grown into the flourishing town which has assumed the name of Gaffney City.

About the year 1804, Michael Gaffney, an intelligent Irish pioneer, settled where Gaffney City now stands; and for 58 years or more, he kept a store and tavern at this place, which was variously called Gaffney's Crossroads, Gaffney's Racing Grounds, and sometimes known as Limestone Springs. A large brick hotel was erected here before the Civil War, and it became the Curtis Female Seminary.

At the time the railroad was completed, the Gaffney estate was in the hands of the heirs, managed by H. G. Gaffney and Dr. J. G. Gaffney, sons of the old pioneer.

In 1863, the only residence on this location was that long occupied by Michael Gaffney. He having died several years previous, his aged widow, in 1873, was almost the only white occupant of the Gaffney estate. She died in 1874 aged about 92. Her maiden name was Mary Smith, a native of the Smith's ford section of Broad River.

When the surveyors who located the Piedmont Air Line reached Gaffney's, they pronounced it the finest location for a city between Charlotte and Atlanta.

When the time came to plan for the town, Tilman R. Gaines asked to submit a sketch. It was drawn after the design of Philadelphia---wide streets at right angles with 20 feet alleys separating each block into lots surrounded by streets and alleys. On this plat was written "Gaffney City". It was accepted by the managers and placed

in the hands of John R. Logan, of Cleveland County, North Carolina, who laid off the town, in the fall of 1873.

The railroad station was established here and Robert M. Gaffney was made agent. He has faithfully and unremittingly filled that situation, with the assistance of his son Fay, to the present day.

The first church organized at Gaffney was the Methodist. They moved a wooden house of worship, "Elim," from two miles out in the country. It was erected about where McArthur's brick academy stands. The Methodists later put up their present brick building.

The Baptist, for several years, used the brick church at Limestone Springs.

About the year 1875, a young English preacher, J. H. Dudley, who came to Gaffney through Gaines' Settlers' agency, in New York, was instrumental in organizing the Gaffney Baptist church, of which Dudley was the first pastor.

Under the energetic efforts of M. S. Lynn and other good men and women, notably Miss Jane Knott, the Presbyterian church was developed, and about the same time the Episcopal church was established by the supervision and earnest efforts of Dr. Holmes and Westervelt and others.

The Presbyterians have recently finished an elegant brick house of worship which is an ornament to the city.

The first school was organized in 1876 by Tilman R. Gaines, who taught the first session in what was then called Carey's Hall, the building now owned by Mrs. Brown. In the fall of 1876 Mr. Gaines gave up the school to return to his agency work in New York.

The board of this school, styled then "The Gaffney City Graded School," in its first circular, invited professor W. F. McArthur, then teaching in Mississippi, to come and take the school at Gaffney, which he did in 1877. His career here in teaching and building his handsome academy and in every good cause, needs but little mention in this community.

As early as 1875, liberal citizens here bought a small outfit of printing material and Mr. Gaines issued several numbers of his immigration monthly in Gaffney, which he removed to New York in 1876. The owners of the type, later turned it over to a Mr. Gregory from Union, who issued for awhile a weekly paper, called the Gaffney Register. Later still Mr. Gaines issued for six months The Weekly Lyceum in Gaffney. The next newspaper in Gaffney was the Ledger, now published by Ed. H. DeCamp, proprietor and editor.

About the year 1876-77, Charles Petty, now editor of the Carolina Spartan, taught school in the Curtis building at Limestone; and many of the Gaffney children attended his school. Later that splendid property went under the control of Peter Cooper, of New York through Gaines' agency, under the direction of a board of trustees, for which Mr. Cooper made provision in his will that the property should be forever used for educational purposes.

Early after this endowment, the board leased the property to Profs. H. P. Griffith and R. O. Sams, who conducted a fine school for several years. Lately Prof. Mack has become the principal, aided by Prof. Griffith. They have a very popular and progressive female seminary. The brick school house west of the railroad, known as the Baptist school, has been in operation, by different teachers, for about ten years.

From the founding of the city, for many years Prof. M. S. Johnson was the instructor in music at Limestone Springs and in the new town where his excellent son, Prof. W. L. Johnson, now fills his place.

The early merchants of Gaffney were Homesley & Clower, Lynn & Jefferies, Carroll & Carpenter, A. N. Wood, J. J. Brown, Nathan Lipscomb, Dr. J. N. Torrence and others. T. Davenport, the Tollesons, the Wilkins, Dr. DuPre, the Calloways, the Littlejohns, Bob Jones, the Sarratts, Goudelock and others, were the second growth of merchants, while many other progressive men have come in during late years.

With the exception of a wagon, buggy and repair shops, run by Anthony, Gilmer, Nantz and others, but little manufacturing was attempted in Gaffney.

Some years ago, Dr. J. N. Torrence and J. A. Carroll joined other capitalists and erected the Cherokee Cotton mills, on Broad River, six miles from Gaffney; while here in town A. N. Wood, our first banker, began to raise stock for a factory in this city. The cause progressed slowly at first, then more steadily and surely, when H. D. Wheat, then superintendent at the Clifton mills, was induced to come to Gaffney to operate mill No. 1 and now he controls No. 1 and No. 2, the largest in the South.

The population of Gaffney now numbers over 4,000 and will soon reach 5,000.

The streets are being extended and dwelling houses, a fine city hall, and other buildings are going up. A graded school, water works and additional railroads, are in contemplation, to be built in the near future.

The site of the town is ample for a population of 50,000; and convenient lots and small tracts can be purchased on easy terms in and around the city.

In point of architecture, our new town has from the beginning been fortunate in having skilled architects and builders to erect buildings for modern style. Emanuel Foggette, a skillful English architect, came here in 1875, and inspired our people with the spirit of substantial and superior styles of building. L. Baker, the builder, has been in Gaffney since the beginning of the town and has given shape to the structures of this growing town. A. B. Gaines, painter and decorator, who finished his lessons in New York, has added greatly to the taste and beauty of the city, by his career in that line.

THE CHEROKEE COTTON MILLS

In passing between Charlotte and Spartanburg on the Southern railroad, the traveler may be attracted by a large river which the trains cross equidistant between Blacksburg and Gaffney City. This is Main Broad river, which heads in the Blue Ridge Mountains, near Black Mountain station, 16 miles east of Asheville. This river made up of clear mountain tributaries, ends in the great Santee, which empties into the Atlantic near Georgetown, South Carolina. From its head to Columbia, South Carolina, are many fine water powers. One of the greatest is that at Columbia, where several cotton mills and other factories are in operation.

In Union County, at Lockhart's Shoals, a large factory has just gone into operation. Further up the river in York County stands, on main Broad river, the Cherokee Cotton Mill, on the site long occupied by the Cherokee and King's Mountain Iron Works.

This factory was built on a small scale about the year 1885, the projectors being, J. Augustus Deal, R. P. Roberts, J. N. Torrence, W. H. Carroll and others.

This factory was destroyed by fire in 1894, and has been rebuilt by the company on a much enlarged plan, under the energetic leadership of J. C. Plonk, the present superintendent. It will operate 22,000 spindles and a proportionate number of looms.

Its president is the progressive James A. Carroll, merchant and banker of Gaffney City. R. P. Roberts, one of the founders, is the secretary and treasurer of the Company.

This factory occupies a fine and picturesque location on Broad River at the point "the Ninety-nine Islands" set in, making almost unlimited waterpowers for miles below.

The Cherokee mills are the last mills on that river, advancing towards its head.

The next movements to build new factories further up the river, are planned on Broad river, which is destined to give sites to more manufacturing than any other stream in Western Carolina.

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L. BAKER'S FACTS ABOUT GAFFNEY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Situated in the North-west part of South Carolina, 55 miles South-west of Charlotte, 70 miles East of Asheville, North Carolina, County seat of Cherokee County, created by the Legislature of 1897--hence a new county seat. The pluck and thrift of her people and the growth of the town from its inception has been phenomenal.

Population 1873, 0; 1893, 2220; 1897, 4,500.

Taxable value of property in 1897, \$2,000,000.

Handles 8,000 bales of cotton annually.

Some of the industries that have been established within the past few years are:

The Gaffney Manufacturing Company, Capital \$800,000.

A new City Hall, cost \$15,000.

Electric Light Plant to light the city.

Complete Telephone system.

Waterworks, bonds voted.

Street Railway connecting the immense lime works at Limestone Springs with the city.

The operating of immense lime works.

The Banking House of A. N. Wood.

The National Bank of Gaffney (established 1897).

In nothing has the progress been more noticeable than the brick business houses that have gone up. The O. R. & C. Railroad will be completed to our town by August 1st, 1897, making Gaffney a competitive point between the Southern and the S. A. L. Gaffney is unequalled in educational advantages for a city of her size, in that she has the Cooper Limestone Institute for Young Ladies, the Gaffney Male and Female Seminary and the Gaffney High School, besides other private schools.

Industries that would do well here on account of the demand for their product, and other local advantages, any of which and many more, would receive substantial aid from our citizens in getting them established here are:

Another Cotton Mill.

A Knitting Factory for Hose and Underwear.

Machine Shops for making Sash, Doors, Blinds, & etc.

A Canning Factory.

A Wagon Factory.

A Pants Factory.

A Cotton Seed Oil Mill.

A Fertilizer Factory.

An Ice Factory.

A Bobbin Mill.

Anyone wishing to engage in day labor, contracting, business, professions, real estate, manufacturing, or anything else, cannot do better than first consult the advantages offered by Gaffney.

For other information write L. Baker, Secretary Business Men's Association, Gaffney, South Carolina.

THE SWEETS OF LIFE IN GAFFNEY

As a person grows older the scenes of past life arise in memory, producing recollections of pleasure or regret in proportion to the circumstances which surrounded that person, and the character and career which made up his record.

The recollections of twenty-five years in Gaffney City, seeing its rise and progress, bring to view many persons still living in this town who took part in its founding and progress; who recall many scenes that usually attend on the building of a new town. Laying off the streets and alleys, blocks and lots. The public auction of the first lots is a day long to be remembered. Uncle Sam Jefferies, riding his big black horse, Caesar, led the large gathering from one block to another, crying out the lots to the highest bidders. A number of excellent men bought lots which brought as high as \$30 to \$100.

Soon after, building began and has continued ever since: and now we have a city growing up on miles of street, extending in all directions, over the beautiful plains.

About a dozen neat church buildings, for whites and colored people, stand on these streets. In the centre of the town, on Park lot, the splendid new City Hall, so spacious that it accommodates the city government, as well as that of the new County of Cherokee, adorns our new capital.

During these fruitful years, we all remember the peace, as well as the progress, that has controlled the community. The first school gathered all the children of the families of the new town in Cary's Hall--the children who have grown into the strong young men and beautiful and charming women who grace so many of our cottages and mansions. Think of the students who have gathered during these years, male and female, at McArthurs and the Baptist High School, and at Cooper-Limestone Institute; of the concerts and other literary entertainments. Recall all the meetings of congregations at their respective churches, and what other town could surpass them in modesty, beauty and christian harmony.

The great factories arose above everything else, and around it a hundred pretty cottages adorn that part of the city. Its industrious operatives swarm in and out; its noble managers watch over all from their elegant office; the bells and steam horns awake the whole community and stir us all to greater energy; and the builders are erecting new houses in every direction.

Gaffney City ought and will, no doubt, continue her goodness, as well as her loveliness and beauty. Let her preachers, her magistrates, her county officers, her every citizen, determine to make this city a model for twentieth century.

Rowland Howard

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OFFICERS OF CHEROKEE

The new county, Cherokee, recently elected their first officers: Clerk of Court, J. Eb. Jefferies, a son of the late John R. Jefferies, of Union County; Treasurer, J. B. Jones, a self-made young man, son of a widow; Auditor, W. D. Camp, a native of Spartanburg, a one-legged confederate soldier; Sheriff, J. B. Ross, son of John Ross; Probate Judge, J. E. Webster, a prominent lawyer of Gaffney City; Supervisor, N. Lipscomb, one of the founders of the city; Manager of Roads, R. M. Jolly, a one-legged confederate, Coroner, A. J. McCraw, elected at the first election, lives out from Gaffney seven miles, on Sarratt's creek. He is 43 years old.

The spacious new city building will furnish court rooms and offices for the county for a period of ten years, during which time the county will erect public buildings.

The first court of Cherokee took place early in June, presided over by Judge Aldrich.

CHEROKEE'S BANKS

A. N. Wood, now Mayor of Gaffney City, came to the city in 1875 and began business as a merchant. Some years later he added banking to his business, and has become the leading financier of Cherokee.

Messrs. Carroll & Carpenter, leading merchants, with Fred Stacy as tradesman and cotton buyer, also added banking. Lately it grew into the National Bank, with Mr. Stacy as president, J. G. Wardlaw, vice president and D. C. Ross, cashier.

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THE GAFFNEY COTTON MILLS

In 1892 H. D. Wheat began the erection of the large cotton mill, with A. N. Wood as president. It is one of the largest in the State, having a smoke-stack 210 feet high. Mr. Wheat, a native of Spartanburg County, was reared under the leadership of D. E. Converse, owner and builder of four factories: Glendale and Clifton Nos. 1, 2, 3 on Pacolet near Spartanburg. Mr. Wheat has proven himself to be probably the leading young manufacturer in the South.

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CHANCES FOR BUSINESS

With a competing railroad in course of construction from Blacksburg across Broad River at Cherokee Mills, Gaffney City now bids fair to become one of the best business centers in the Piedmont Belt. The plan of extending railroad facilities through Polk County and across the Blue Ridge to connect with the great centers of Western North Carolina and Tennessee, has an outlook of great importance to the future of Cherokee County in developing its minerals and to Gaffney City as a trade center.

The settlers of this section of county and its county seat are mostly southerners well qualified for solid citizenship, farming and merchandising. The opening now is for capitalists and manufacturers in iron, wood and other products. Vacant lots and small farms can be had in and near the growing town, which is destined to spread out on this fine location.

A few new hotels here would make Gaffney City a fine resort, winter and summer.

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LAWYERS OF CHEROKEE

Our new county is fortunate in the class of young lawyers who have settled in Gaffney City for practice in Cherokee County.

J. E. Webster, the Probate Judge, has been an active attorney for several years in our town and has proved himself to be a good lawyer and useful citizen.

J. C. Jefferies, who was reared in Gaffney, spent a few years in Greenville, South Carolina, where he took a high position in the court. He is now a permanent citizen of the city, having entered with his family into a fine new residence built for them by his father, Capt. Sam Jefferies, who is doing very much in building on his lots up the town.

T. B. Butler, late of Union, South Carolina, has located in Gaffney and become a prominent lawyer and working citizen in the establishing the new county.

J. B. Bell, late of York County, and Hugh Long, prominent young lawyer of North Carolina, have located in our growing town.

Robert Gantt, who practiced at Spartanburg, has moved his office to Gaffney City.

Mr. Webb Hardin, a fine lawyer residing at Blacksburg, is prominent in the Cherokee Court.

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THE DOCTORS

The city has ten practicing physicians Drs. Smith, Fort, Crawley, Miller, Littlejohn, Settlemeyer, Sarratt, Bates, Jefferies, and Dr. Garrett, who is a prominent dentist.

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THE SCHOOLS

Are conducted by Professors McArthur, Mack, Griffith, Sarratts, and their assistants.

Prof. W. L. Johnson is teacher of music and leader of choirs in two churches.

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THE PASTORS

Of the white churches of the city are : Baptist, B. P. Robertson, Mr. Thommason, and Mr. Thompson; Presbyterian, C. E. Robertson, Methodist, J. C. Crout; Episcopal, Rev. Mr. Anderson.

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WEST GAFFNEY

The streets leading westward are to be extended through a choice site for enlarging the city. While this is just outside the corporate limits, it will be called West Gaffney. There are many attractions to this locality as the original forests stand on it, with nice cool brooks running through them. A beautiful park could be improved in West Gaffney.

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THE PATRIARCH OF THE CITY

The only living child of the pioneer settler of this section of the county, Mike Gaffney, is at the homestead with the family of J. J. Gaffney. This is Henry G. Gaffney, now 83 years old. He has been supervisor of the location and division of the Gaffney estate on which the city is built, and ever alive to the progress and welfare of the community.

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FROM MURPHY TO GAFFNEY --- FROM CHEROKEE TO CHEROKEE

It will be remembered by students of geography and travelers that Cherokee is the most westward county in North Carolina. It joins the border lines of Georgia and Tennessee. Valley River runs through this fine county and empties into the beautiful Hiwassee, on which the growing county seat, Murphy, is situated at the confluence of Valley River with Hiwassee.

The new county of Cherokee in South Carolina borders on North Carolina in the Piedmont belt and is watered by Broad River which flows South, making the Santee, the greatest river of the Carolinas. Gaffney City has been made the capitol of Cherokee in the Palmetto State.

From Asheville Murphy is about 80 miles westward and is the terminus of the Ducktown branch of the Southern Railroad. Gaffney City is about 80 miles south-east from Asheville, located on the Southern, 55 miles west from Charlotte, only a few miles from the line between the two Carolinas.

From Murphy to Asheville, the railroad passes up the Cherokee Valley, crossing the Nantihalla mountains and the Balsam. Between Murphy and Asheville are nice villages--Andrews, Bryson City, Dillsboro, Sylva, Maynesville, Clyde, and Canton. The mountain and valley scenery along this line is splendid.

From Asheville to Gaffney City, two branches of the Southern pass out of North Carolina and reach Cherokee, via, Charlotte and Spartanburg. The scenery along these lines crossing the Blue Ridge at the Swannanoa Gap and at Flat Rock, bring to view Round Knob, the Catawba Valleys, King's Mountain, and numerous other grand objects along the eastern branch viz Salisbury; while on the Asheville and Spartanburg branch, the French Broad and the Tryon Valleys, Pisgah and Tryon mountains.

On the heights around Asheville, looking westward, you behold the magnificent scenery stretching towards Cherokee in North Carolina; while from Old Bald, Sugar Leaf, or Mitchell's Peak, you can view the Piedmont belt with South Carolina's Cherokee through which flows Broad River.

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GAFFNEY A SUMMER AND WINTER RESORT

In the days before the civil war Gaffney was chosen as a summer and winter resort; and at the famous Limestone Spring a company of capitalists erected a spacious brick building for a resort hotel. There the leading men of the state spent winters and summers, and it became the Saratoga of the South. Several prominent citizens from the low country erected permanent residences in which they lived in retirement; and those houses are still conspicuous monuments of ante-bellum times. The hotel property was purchased about the year 1850 and converted into Curtis Female College, which up to 1860, was the most popular college in the South. It is still operated as a female college known as the Cooper-Limestone Seminary.

Since the building up of Gaffney City, efforts are being made to make it one of the attractive resorts for visitors from all sections. Its location in the Piedmont belt on the Southern railroad renders it a most desirable winter and summer health resort. Several elegant residences offer rooms and board for people from the north as well as other sections of the country.

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LYCEUM SCHOOLS

In view of the pressing need of a more practical system of educating the youths of our flourishing new county and town, the editor of this Magazine proposes to co operate with the public in establishing such schools as the changing condition of our times demand.

The system which will quickest and most simply unfold the practical truths of business, and bring out the useful powers of the mind, should be our object. Old customs and modes are too complicated and require too many books and too much time spent in their courses, to say nothing of burdensome expenses. Economy in the cost of schooling our children is greatly needed. Look out for efforts to begin changes of this kind.

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J. Q. Little, a progressive citizen of Gaffney City, has about \$ 23,000 stock in the Gaffney Mills. He has been a worker.

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Permission for the use of this material was secured from Mr. A. B. Gaines son of Mr. Tilman R. Gaines who published THE LYCEUM at Asheville, North Carolina and Gaffney, South Carolina.

Additional copies of this early history of Gaffney and Cherokee County, South Carolina may be secured from the Gaffney Chamber of Commerce at Gaffney, South Carolina.

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